

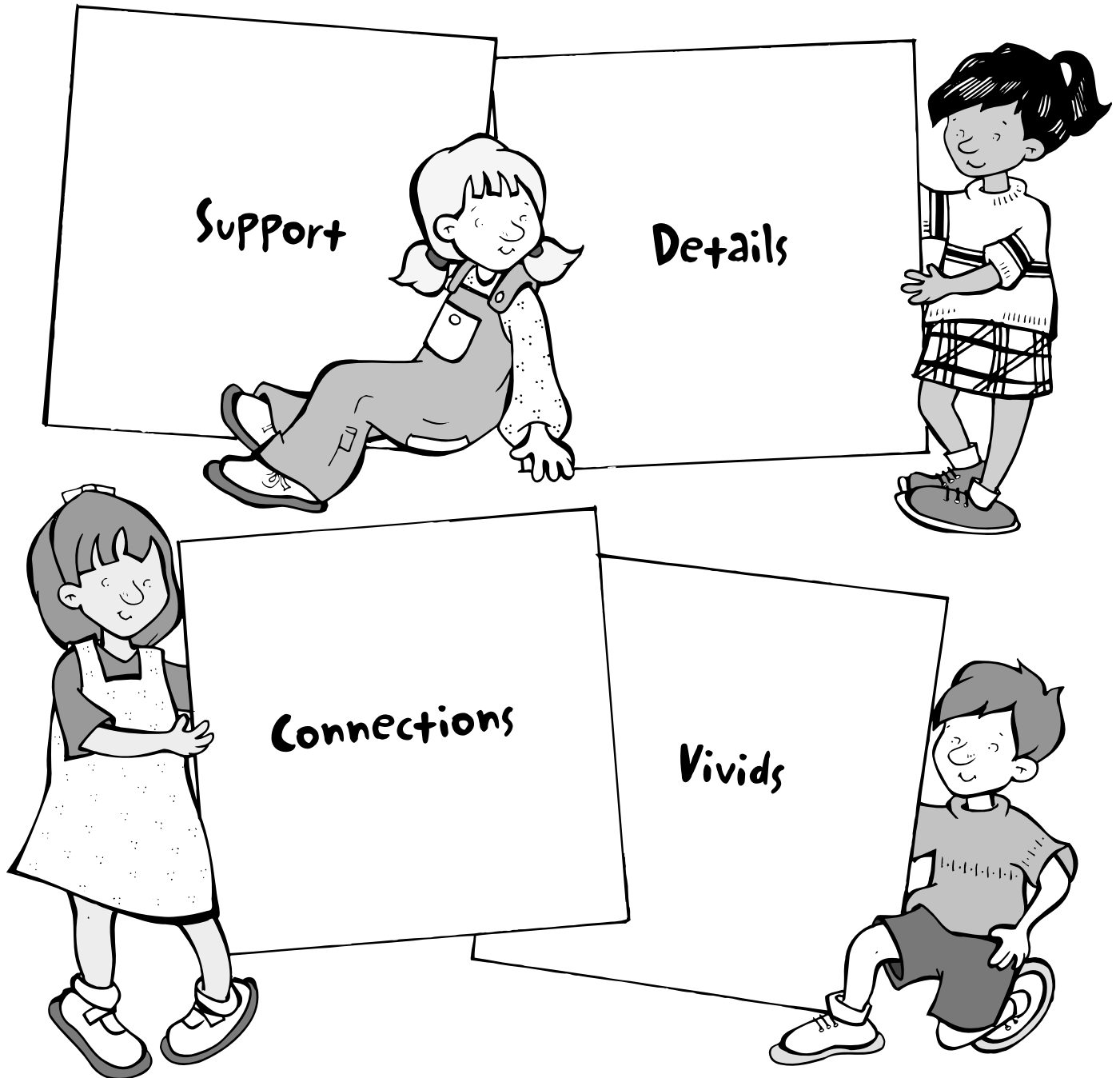
# **Four Square Writing Method**

**Sample pages downloaded at  
<http://www.TeachingLearning.com>**

# Section 1

## Getting Organized

### Learning the Four Square



# Step 1

## Getting Started Before the 4□

We begin our study of organization and prewriting thought process with a focus on the expository style. There are several reasons for teaching this first. One reason is that students typically find this the most daunting type of writing, and mastery of a difficult form builds confidence for future application. However, more importantly, expository writing on a familiar or personal topic is a classic topic of primary grade discourse and journaling. Students want to tell you about the things they know best and all the reasons they love them. These topics are magically convenient for writing and thought organization practice.

The prewriting organization activities used to prepare students for expository writing are identical to those activities required for the descriptive and persuasive forms, so no duplication of effort is needed to transfer skills. However, the instruction will focus on the expository because it allows for a combination of description and persuasion. Suggestions for teaching the difference between styles is included in a later section of this book.



# Pre 4□ Activities

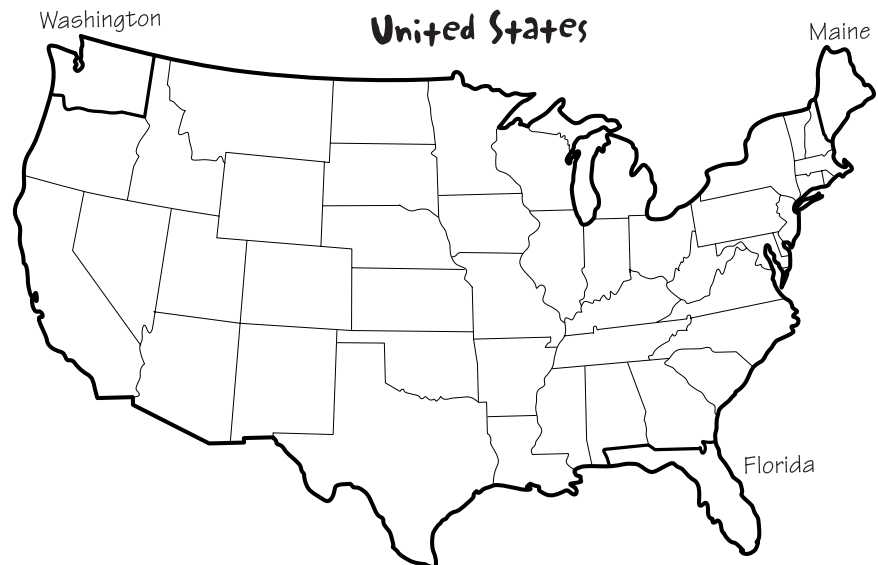
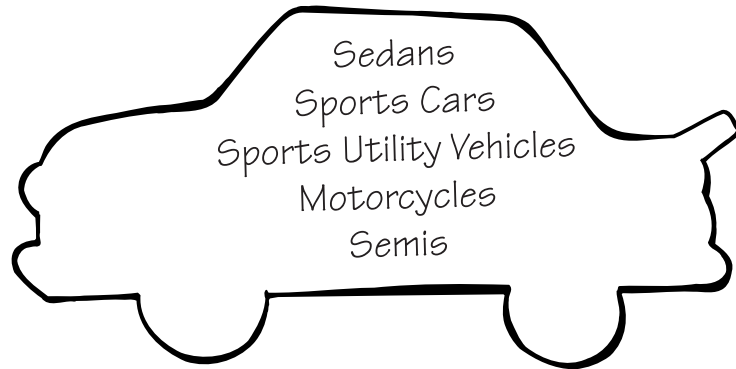
## *Understanding Relationships*

In order to organize writing into topics and subtopics, we first need to explore the ways that things are related. Some words, objects or ideas are broad and can encompass other ideas. Beneath these broad words, objects or ideas we can give examples, definitions or subcategories. Before students can develop main idea and supporting detail, they must understand that the subordination of one idea to another is natural and something they have observed in their world.

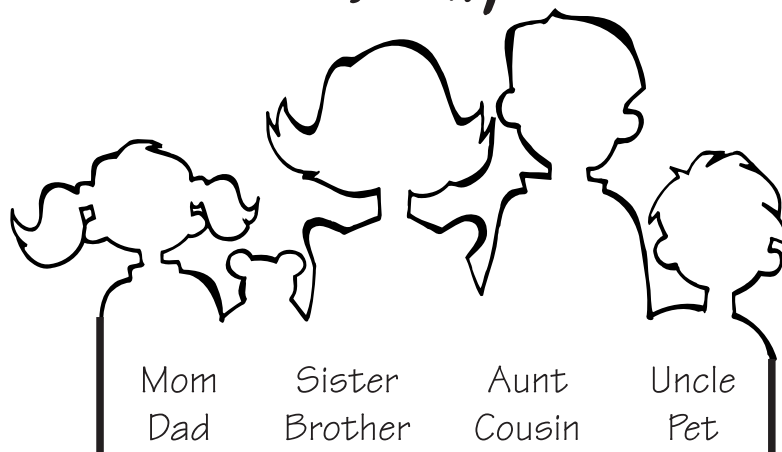
Provide multiple examples of this relationship's practice. Students can be challenged to think of as many subtopics to an idea as possible, using cereal brands; rock bands; football, baseball, soccer or hockey teams; television programs or any other familiar and comfortable topic. We want students to feel like this is a "game" and to achieve immediate success in writing instruction.

Reproducible worksheets are provided on pages 9-10 for practicing this important concept.

### **Vehicles**



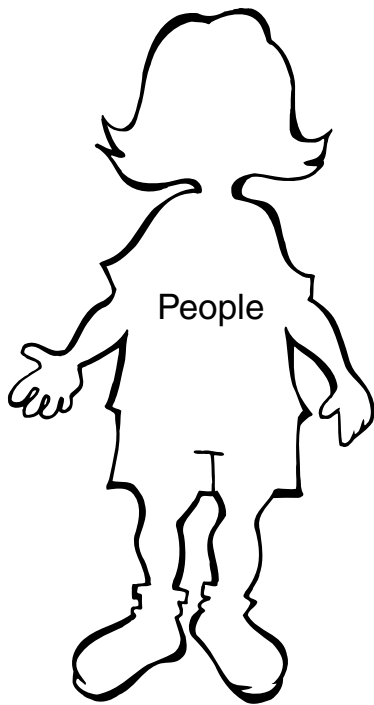
### **Family**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding Relationships

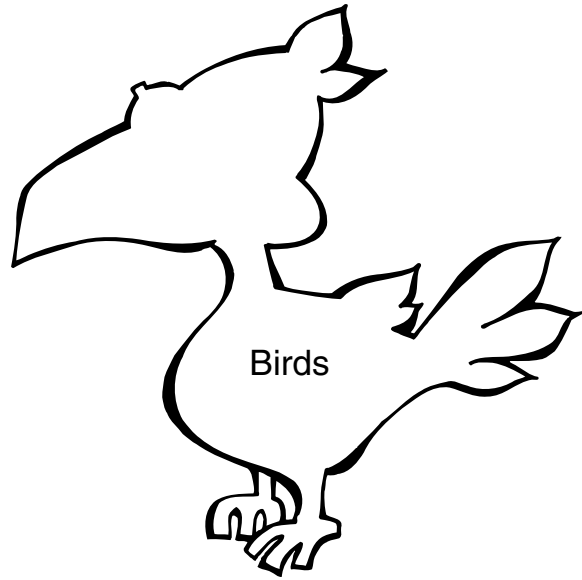
*Directions: Fill in the lines beneath the topic with three items that belong as subtopics.*



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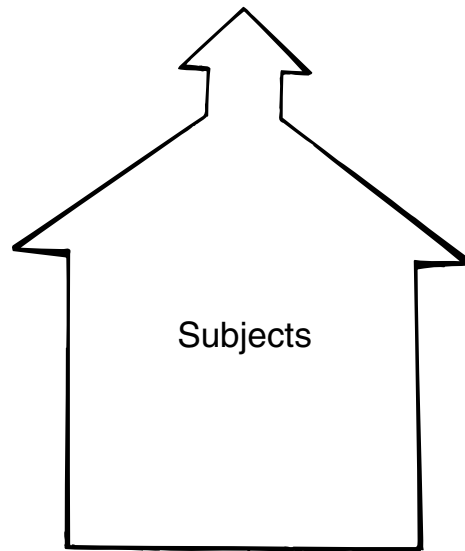
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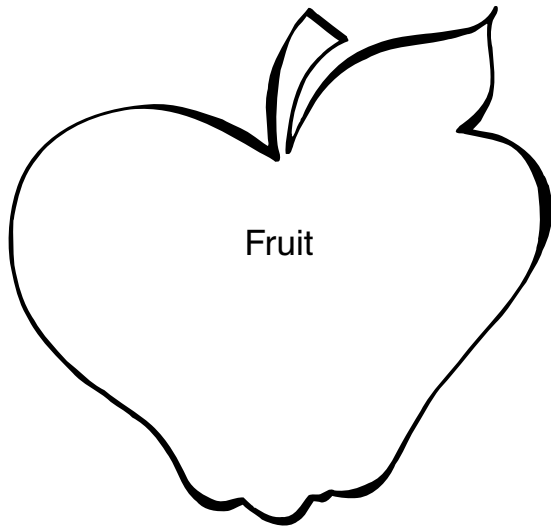
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding Relationships

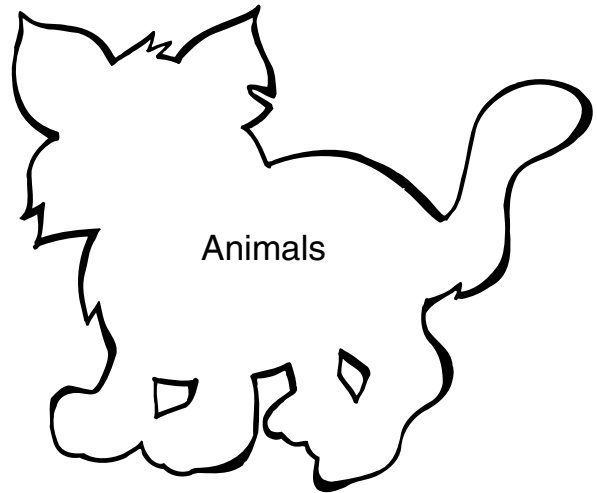
*Directions: Fill in the lines beneath the topic with three items that belong as subtopics.*



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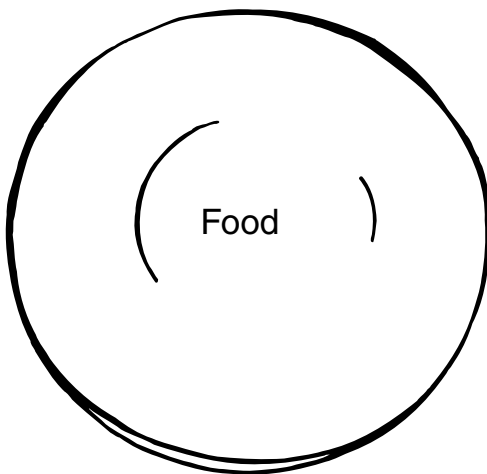
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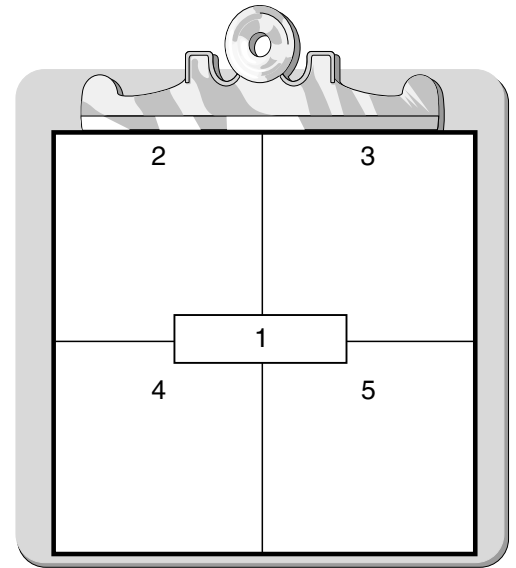
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# Step 1

4 

## *Brainstorming Three Supporting Ideas and Writing a Concluding Sentence*

In this step we move our brainstorming activity onto the four square format. We will continue our practice in understanding the relationships between ideas. The main, broad or general idea is placed in the center box of the four square (box 1). The top two boxes (2 and 3) are each used for an example, detail or definition of the central idea in box 1. The lower left (box 4) is used for a supporting example or detail as well. The remaining box, lower right (box 5), will be employed to build a summary or concluding sentence. In practice this is referred to as the “wrap-up” sentence because it encompasses all the ideas developed in the four square in the form of a series sentence.



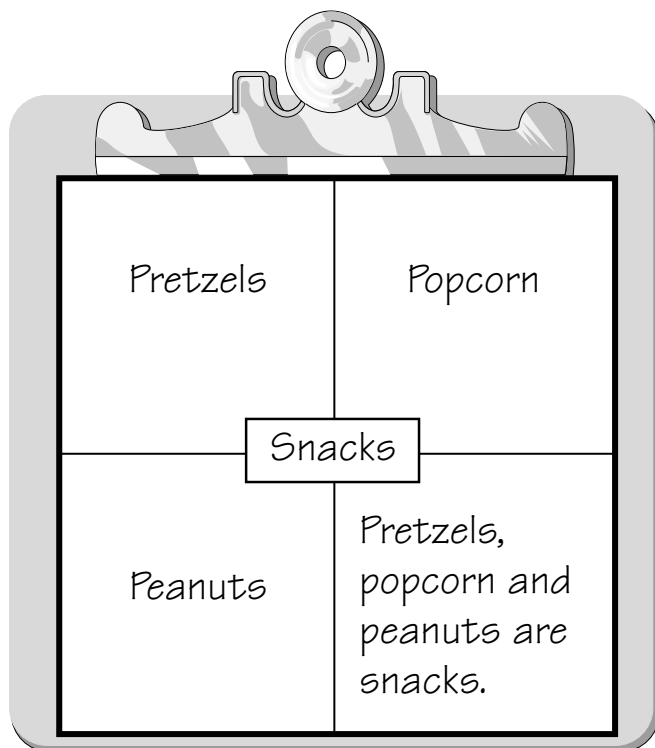
While introducing the series sentence on instruction this early may cause technical difficulties, the importance of the wrap-up sentence cannot be understated. This all-encompassing sentence is the basis for future development of introductory and concluding paragraphs. Indeed, the wrap-up is truly the statement of the three-pronged thesis for a thesis and development paper. Just remind students of the need for commas in the serial sentence and get beyond the technical. **Throughout four square instruction, spelling and most technical matters are deemphasized.** Our goal is to GET STUDENTS TO THINK!



When this stage is first done with students, it is helpful to point out the similarities between the basic four square and the preschool game “one of these things is not like the other” as played on television’s *Sesame Street*. Remind students that the central topic is the important one. All other boxes touch the middle one, so we must stay close to it.

The brainstorming should be an engaging challenge to students, encouraging even reluctant writers to participate!

It is recommended that students practice this very basic four square repeatedly. Whole class modeling and cooperative writing can be used. Small group work is also very effective in these early stages of instruction on the organizer. The basic four square provided on page 13 can be duplicated on a transparency for an overhead projector or opaque machine. Each group draws a topic “out of a bag” and the recorder writes it in the center box of the transparency with a wet-erase pen. The group then completes the four square cooperatively. The use of groups removes any intimidation and also promotes the idea that the four square is a friendly, game-like approach to writing. Teams may even race one another. Also, students enjoy writing on the transparencies and placing them on the machine!



At this stage, students will be happy to be reminded that thus far you have asked them to write only one sentence!

(Reproducible workbook practice pages for this stage follow the transparency reproducible on pages 14 and 15.)

*This example of a basic four square shows the relationships between the main idea—“snacks”—and the three sub-ideas—pretzels, popcorn and peanuts.*



Group: \_\_\_\_\_

A diagram of a square divided into four quadrants by a vertical and a horizontal line. A horizontal rectangle is centered across the middle of the square, overlapping the vertical line and extending into the left and right quadrants.